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ROME IN TRANSFORMATION.

No city is going through so rapid and radical a transformation as Rome. The map of the town published only in 1886, at the beginning of 1889 is scarcely serviceable. A great question had to be solved: how to accommodate the Rome whose history goes back into a remote antiquity, a city crowded with relics of the past from that remote period when it was first founded, with the requirements of a modern capital to a new kingdom.

The Rome of the popes went on in a happy-go-lucky fashion, houses, churches, palaces, ruins jumbled together, without a proper thoroughfare from one end of the town to another; and so long as Rome was but the capital of the Papal States and a curiosity-shop, that was well enough; but such a condition of affairs could not exist when it became the centre of political and social and mercantile life to an entire kingdom. Accordingly, Rome is going through, as stated, a rapid and radical change, so rapid that one-half of the space within the old walls, mapped in 1886 as garden and vineyard, is now covered with houses; so radical, that large portions of the town are being absolutely transformed. For instance, the banks of the Tiber were crowded with mean and miserable houses, and the river was only reached at the bridges. One of the main bridges, that of Quattro Capite, connecting the city with Trastevere by the Tiberine island, had as an artery of traffic a wretched lane, in places fifteen and a half feet wide, in one place the roadway narrowing even to eleven and a half feet.

The Tiber has been known to rise from thirty to thirty-five feet, as was the case in the inundation of 1871. Its average width is sixty-five yards, and its depth twenty feet. The houses on both sides of the river have been pulled down; magnificent embankments of masonry are being constructed, enclosing and slightly widening the stream—a work worthy of the ancient Romans; and on the top a broad esplanade is being formed, so that eventually it will be possible to walk along

the river on both sides of the Tiber, as on the Thames Embankment. The old bridge of Sixtus IV., constructed in 1474, has been removed, and a new bridge erected in its place, sixty-three feet wide. The view from this bridge and that of Quattro Capi have long been famous. It is, however, doubtful how long it will be remarkable, for enormous houses seven stories high are being erected along the new embankment, which will shut out the view not only of St Peter's, but also of the Janiculum and of Monte Mario. What will be a gain in one way will be a loss in another. If the municipality and the building Companies could be brought to consider how ruinous to the effect it will be to shut out these objects from view, and to moderate the height of the new rows of houses, the alteration would be a real advantage.

Archæologists are animadverting angrily on the destruction of certain ruins that have been brought to light by the alterations; but it may well be asked, whether it was possible under the circumstances to save them. Rome is not a healthy city. The narrow lanes and foul habitations were nesting-places for fever-germs, and what was essential, if the city was to become a capital and largely to increase, was, that great passages should be driven through these dens of poison, to let the fresh air in. The Via Nazionale is such a ventilator. It is not completed, but it is being carried daily, as the work of demolition proceeds, deeper into these slums, and will finally reach the river.

The Corso is at best narrow, and in time will no doubt be widened, but it ends at the great mass of brick buildings, the Venetian Palace. At the present time, houses are being demolished beside the Capitol, where now runs the Via Marforio, so that the Corso may be carried on, and skirting the Forum and the Basilica of Constantine, strike the Colosseum; then the winds will blow through Rome.

Every one who has been in Rome knows the slums that lie between the Forum and Santa Maria Maggiore. Here also demolition is going on; and a thoroughfare is being made to let air

in and traffic pass, a thoroughfare which will eventually open out of the continued Corso. In so doing, extensive remains of the Temple of Venus Genetrix, hitherto concealed behind houses, have been disclosed.

But there is one sacrifice being made which might well have been omitted. The beautiful villa gardens, with their ilexes and their stone pines and their cypresses, are being ruthlessly destroyed. The railway station and goods department occupy the site of what was one of the loveliest gardens in the world. The glorious gardens of the Ludovisi Palace are gone, occupied by hideous blocks of modern houses. On the Via Salaria these glorious gardens are in process of destruction, the century-old trees being hacked down. All the gardens, vineyards, that extended from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore to the Lateran are built over.

The presence of parks in a town is necessary to its salubrity; they are open spaces in which the fresh air blows; consequently, it is a mistake to wreck these gardens from a sanitary point of view, apart from the loss to the eye, and the destruction of what constituted one of the main charms of old papal Rome. The new Government, or rather the municipality, seem to entertain a hatred of trees; wherever they can, they hew them down, not only with detriment to the landscape, but with injury to health, for every tree and shrub and flower assists in the purification of the atmosphere. In the same way have the municipal authorities stripped the ruins of the creepers and other plants that veiled their raggedness. Mr Hare, in his *Walks in Rome*, says: 'The whole aspect of the city is changed, and the picturesqueness of old days must now be sought in such obscure corners as have escaped the hands of the spoiler. The glorious gardens of the Villa Negroni and Villa Ludovisi have been annihilated; ancient convents have been levelled with the ground or turned into barracks; historic churches have been yellow-washed or modernised; the pagan ruins have been denuded of all that gave them picturesqueness or beauty. The Palace of the Cæsars is stripped of all the flowers and shrubs which formerly adorned it. The baths of Caracalla, which, till 1870, were one of the most beautiful spots in the world, are now scarcely more attractive than the ruins of a London warehouse. Many of the most interesting temples have been dwarfed by the vulgarest and tallest of modern buildings. Even the Colosseum has been rendered a centre for fever by aimless excavations, and has been deprived not only of its shrines, but of its marvellous flora, though in dragging out the roots of its shrubs, more of the building was destroyed than would have fallen naturally in five centuries.' Indeed, as they now appear, the ruins more resemble masses of old mite-eaten Stilton cheese than anything else, and are wholly void of charm. A vast amount of irreparable mischief to Christian antiquities is being wrought outside the Porta Pia and Porta Salaria, where ranges of model-lodging-house style of buildings are being run up to accommodate the lower classes, and their foundations are being laid in the early Christian catacombs, which are choked up with rubbish, and ruthlessly broken through

to form basements and cellars for these vile erections.

Another work that is being carried on, and which is greatly altering the appearance of the city, is the levelling the historic hills and filling in the valleys between, so as to form comparatively level runs for the streets and for the accommodation of tramcars. It is not possible to altogether abolish the hills, or the municipal council would do it; as, however, the seven hills are too great, and defy that, the excavators take slices out of their sides, or take off their heads and make embankments across the valleys, and fill up wherever filling-up can be done, so as to form a series of *piani* or levels, along which the carriages and buses can run without any great amount of collar-work for the horses.

The Anio makes a great loop about the Mons Sacer. 'This spot,' as Arnold says, in his *History of Rome*, 'on which the great deliverance had been achieved, became to the Romans what Runnymede is to Englishmen: the top of the hill was left for ever unenclosed and consecrated.' It was to this spot that the plebeians seceded, and where they encamped, B.C. 494, till they had extorted from the patricians the concessions of tribunes who were to represent the interests of the people. Alas! even this Mons Sacer is not sacred to the eyes of the municipal authorities, which is being carted away as building material for the ranges of new houses which are making Rome as modern and hideous as are the new quarters of a thousand cities on the Continent, all equally hideous and uniform in their type.

There is no *pro* without its *con*. The capital of Italy must be Rome. That was decided upon, regardless of other considerations than sentiment. Having decided on making it the capital of Italy, it is hard to see what else could be done. A vast increase of accommodation was necessary, and means of passage from one part of the city to another must be found; it was impossible for the traffic now trebled to pass through the old arteries.

There was much against making Rome a capital. It is unhealthy except during the winter. It is the curiosity-shop of Europe. It was full from end to end of historic associations. It could be enlarged only on one side. Florence, on the other hand, is healthy; there was little to spoil there in order to acquire room; and the city could be expanded indefinitely on all sides.

But, as the determination was come to that Rome was to be the capital, there was no choice in the matter—the place must be fitted to the demands of the population crowding into it, and to the exigencies of a capital city where is the court and centre of government.

The artist complains that the picturesqueness of Rome is being destroyed; but we are much inclined to dispute the picturesqueness of the dirty houses and narrow streets that are being swept away; and the antiquary must remember that if some few things have to go, a great deal that was hidden has been revealed, and discoveries made which are a real gain to archaeological science, and which would not have been made but for the remodelling of Rome under the new régime.

Then again, and lastly, is not the health, the happiness of the present and the future, better

than a little questionable picturesqueness and a few crumbling walls? The increase in the population of Rome is so rapid that the crowding, and with the crowding, disease and death would be rampant, were it not that the municipality had faced the problem and resolved on a re-planning of the city. The old emperors brought pure water into Rome, and Rome now enjoys an abundance of fresh and wholesome water. But what Rome does not enjoy is fresh and wholesome air, and that is what the municipality are introducing as fast as they possibly can. By all means let the relics of the past be preserved, but not at the expense of the present.

A DEAD RECKONING.

BY T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER X.

IN less than a week after her interview with Picot, Mrs Brooke, her husband, and Miss Primby were settled in their new home. The rooms recommended by the Frenchman had proved more to Clara's liking than any she had seen elsewhere, and she at once engaged them. The furniture and fittings were to a great extent after the cheap and tawdry style so much affected by the inferior class of French lodging-house keepers; but as the whole place was pervaded by an air of cleanliness, such little *désagréments* as existed in other respects Clara was prepared to overlook.

No. 5 Pymm's Buildings was one of a row of half-a-dozen houses similar to itself in size and outward aspect, situated in a quiet court abutting on a main thoroughfare in the busy and populous district of Soho. All the houses in Pymm's Buildings accommodated a more or less numerous tribe of lodgers, the lower floors being generally arranged in suites of rooms for the convenience of families, while the top floors were usually divided into separate sleeping apartments. And it was in this place and amid such sordid surroundings that the whilom owner of Beechley Towers hoped to find for a little time a secure shelter from the hue and cry of the ten thousand hounds of policedom, each and all of whom were doing their utmost to run him to earth. His idea had been to bury himself in the heart of some densely populated district where one man is but as a grain of sand among ten thousand others, and in so far it may be surmised that he had been successful.

When Mrs Brooke quitted Beechley Towers secretly and by night to join her husband in London, Margery, faithful Margery, was the only one who was made aware of her departure. The girl pleaded so hard to be allowed to accompany her, that at last Clara was fain to make her a promise that she would send for her as soon as she was settled in her new home. Thus it fell out that Margery was now here, and her mistress found the value of her services in a score different ways. For instance, Margery did all the marketing, and did it for little more than half what it had cost before her arrival. Poor simple-minded Clara, who believed everybody to be as honest as herself, had been imposed upon at every turn; but the shopman or peripatetic vendor who succeeded in 'besting' Margery, as

she termed it, must have been very wide-awake indeed. The girl would haggle for half an hour over a penny, and her powers of vituperation always rose to the level of the occasion.

What was Mrs Brooke's surprise about the third day after her arrival at Pymm's Buildings, as she was on her way down-stairs, to encounter M. Picot on his way up! Then it came out that the mountebank rented a room at the top of the house which he looked upon as a permanent home, and occupied as such when his avocations did not take him elsewhere. Had Mrs Brooke been aware of this fact at the time, she might perhaps have hesitated before deciding to take the rooms. And yet, somehow, she had an instinctive feeling of trust in the mountebank—the same sort of trust, although in a lesser degree, that she had in Margery; and after the first tremor of alarm which shot through her when she encountered him on the staircase, she never felt a moment's doubt that her secret, or as much of it as he might know or suspect, was safe in his keeping. It became, of course, necessary to explain to him that it was she and her husband, and not any one else, whose fortunes had changed so wofully. But Picot was one of the most incurious of mortals outside the range of his own affairs. He only remembered Clara as 'la belle madame' who had kissed his boy and spoken kindly to him and had laden him with gifts, and about whom Henri often spoke when his father and he were alone. He had never thought of asking any one what her name was; and even now, when he understood from Clara how terribly the circumstances of herself and her husband were changed, he expressed neither curiosity nor surprise in the matter. He was *vraiment désolé*—he was heart-broken to think that such should be the case; but that was all. He did indeed, a little later, ask the landlord the name of his new lodgers; and when he was told that they were known as Mr and Mrs Stewart, he repeated the name to himself two or three times over, so as to impress it on his memory, and then went contentedly on his way.

The furnished lodgings rented by Mr and Mrs 'Stewart' comprised three rooms on the first floor and two on the second. As it chanced, the rooms on the ground-floor were at present untenanted. The sitting-room had two windows and was a tolerably sized apartment. In it, about eight o'clock on a certain autumn evening, were seated Miss Primby and Margery. The former, as usual, was engaged on some kind of delicate embroidery; while the latter was trying her hand at a little plain sewing, the result being that on an average she pricked her finger once every three or four minutes. But, indeed, the girl was somewhat nervous this evening, or what she herself would have termed 'in a pucker.' She had had the ill-fortune to break a cup while washing up the tea-things.

'O mum, do you think Mrs Stewart will let me stay when I tell her? She won't turn me away, will she?'

'Why, of course not, Margery. It was an accident; it cannot be helped.'

'Oh, thank you for saying that, mum. Sometimes my fingers seem as if they were all thumbs, and I lets everything drop. But I wants no wages, mum, and I ain't a big eater—leastways

I think not; and I'll eat less than ever now, so as to help to pay for the cup. A crust o' bread and drippin', a few cold taters, and the teapot after everybody else has done with it—that'll do me.'

'You must not talk like that, Margery; your mistress would not like it.'

'Oh, but you don't know how sorry I am, mum. Mariar—her on the boat—always used to say as I was a great awkward lout of a girl; and she was about right there.'

The two went on with their work for a little while in silence, and then Margery said: 'You'll excuse me, mum, for saying so, but I've often wondered why such a nice lady as you never got married.'

The spinster could not help bridding a little. 'Married! How absurd of you, Margery,' she exclaimed. 'From what I have seen of married life, I'm sure I am far better off as I am.' Then, as if by way of afterthought: 'Not but what I have had several most eligible offers at various times.'

'Lor! mum, didn't it make you feel all-overish-like when they went flop on their knees and asked you to marry 'em?'

'Gentlemen don't often go on their knees nowadays. Still, I have had them do that to me more than once. I remember that when Mr Tubbins, the eminent brewer, did so, he was so very stout that he could not get up again without assistance.'

'My! I'd have stuck a pin into him; that would have made him jump,' cried the girl with her strange laugh.

At this juncture the door opened and Mrs Brooke came in. She was plainly dressed in black, and was closely veiled. Since Margery's arrival she rarely ventured out of doors till dusk, and then only when she wanted to do a little shopping such as the girl could not do for her. Any one who had not seen her since that April evening when M. Karovsky's ill-omened shadow first darkened the terrace at Beechley Towers, might have been excused for failing to recognise her again. It was not merely that she looked older by more years than the months which had elapsed since that day—anguish, anxiety, and the dread which never ceased to haunt her of what the next hour might bring forth, had marked their cruel lines on her features in a way that Time's gentle if inexorable graver never does when left to labour alone. The clear dancing light had died out of her eyes long ago; they looked larger and shone with a deeper and more intense lustre than in the days gone by; but a sudden knock at the door, an unusual footfall on the stairs, or the voices of strange men talking in the court below, would fill them on a sudden with a sort of startled terror, just as the eyes of a deer may fill when first it hears the baying of the far-away hounds.

She took off her bonnet with an air of weariness and sat down. 'Has not Gerald returned yet?' she said to her aunt. 'What can have become of him?'

'The evening is so fine that he has probably gone for a longer walk than ordinary.'

'It makes me wretched when he stays out longer than usual. And yet, poor fellow! what a life is his. To be shut up in one miserable room from

morning till night; never to venture out till after dark, and then only with the haunting dread that he may be recognised and arrested at any moment! How will it all end?' She sighed and went into the other room. Presently she returned, and a few moments later a knock at the door made every one start. Margery hastened to open it. Outside stood Picot carrying a bunch of flowers. 'Bon soir, madame,' he said, addressing himself to Clara with a low bow, and then favouring Miss Primby with another.

'Bon soir, Monsieur Picot. Entrez, s'il vous plait.'

'Merci, madame,' he answered as he advanced into the room. 'I have here a petit bouquet—a few flowers—which Henri has sent for madame, if she will have the bonté to accept them.'

'I shall be charmed to do so,' answered Clara as she took the flowers. 'How fresh and sweet they smell! I am much obliged to Henri, and to you also, monsieur.'—The mountebank made another low sweeping bow.—'I hope that Henri is quite well?'

'Parfaitement bien, madame.'

'The first time he has a holiday, he must come and take tea with me; I will not forget to have a nice cake for the occasion.'

'He will be enchanté, madame.—Ah! if madame could see him on the trapeze—could but see him jumpeze from one bar to another—it is splendid, magnifique!'

'I think I would rather not see Henri go through any of his performances, monsieur.'

'Mais, madame!' with an expressive shrug; 'there is no danger, nothings to be afraid of. Oh, the grand artiste that Henri will be one day! He is twice so clevare as I was at his age. He will be what you call in England great man—big fellow.'

'I am very glad to hear it. Meanwhile, you will not forget that he is to come some afternoon and take tea with me.'

'Ah, madame, he talk about you every day.—But I go now. I hope that monsieur your husband finds himself quite well?'

'Quite well, thank you, monsieur.'

With that the mountebank made his adieux and bowed himself out.

It here becomes needful to explain that just then Henri was engaged at a certain hippodrome as one of a troupe of juvenile acrobats who, under the pseudonym of 'les frères Donati,' and under the tuition of a celebrated 'Professor,' were performing a number of well-nigh incredible feats before crowded and enthusiastic houses.

'Ain't he polite!' said Margery as Picot closed the door. 'But what a pity the poor man talks such a lot of gibberish.'

'What can have become of Gerald?' said Clara for the second time, as she went to the window and drawing aside the curtain peered into the darkness. 'I never knew him to be so late before. I cannot help feeling dreadfully uneasy.' Then turning to Margery, she said: 'Here is a list of things I want you to fetch from the grocer's in Medwin Street. Do you think you can find your way in the dark?'

'Why, of course, mum. I never gets lost, I don't.' Half a minute later she ran down-stairs, whistling as she went.

The minutes dragged themselves slowly away,

and Clara was working herself into a fever of apprehension, when a well-known footfall on the stairs caused a cry of gladness to burst from her lips. 'At last!' she exclaimed as she started to her feet and hurried to the door. 'How glad I am that you are safely back,' she added as her husband entered the room. 'You were away so long that I grew quite frightened.'

'The evening was so pleasant, that I extended my walk farther than I intended. I must be a caged bird now for the next four-and-twenty hours. Heigh-ho!'

'Will you not have something to eat?'

'Thanks; nothing at present,' he answered as he proceeded to lay aside his slouched hat, his overcoat, and the muffler which had shrouded the lower part of his face. Then he took up a book and sat down in an easy-chair near the fire.

His wife's eyes brimmed with tears as they rested on him. 'My poor boy!' she said softly to herself. 'This life is killing him. When, oh, when will it end!' She sat down to her needle-work.

Miss Primby was the first to break the silence. 'Do you know, my dear,' she said to her niece, 'that Monsieur Picot puts me greatly in mind of the Count de Bonnechose, a French nobleman who once made me an offer of marriage. He used to speak just the same delightful broken English—and then he had such great black eyes, which seemed to pierce right through you, and the loveliest waxed moustaches; so that when he clasped his hands and turned up his eyes till nothing but the whites of them were visible, and murmured "Mon ange," and called me his "beautiful Engleesh mees," can you wonder that my heart used to thrill responsively?'

Clara could not repress a smile. 'I am by no means sure that I should have cared to call that count my uncle.'

'It was a mercy that I sent him about his business. He turned out to be no nobleman at all, but only a hairdresser's assistant whose father had left him a little money. But certainly he had remarkably fine eyes.'

Again there was a brief space of silence. This time it was broken by a knock which sounded all the more startling because no one had heard the faintest sound of footsteps on the stairs. All three started to their feet and looked at each other. Then, at a sign from Clara, Miss Primby crossed to the door and opened it.

Framed by the doorway and shone upon by the lamplight from within, they beheld the black-clothed figure, the statuesque, colourless face and the inscrutable eyes of M. Karovsky.

'Karovsky—you!' cried Gerald as he sprang forward.

'Yes, I—why not?' said the Russian with a smile, as he raised his hat and came forward. 'Ladies, your servant.' Then to Gerald: 'You stare at me, mon ami, as if I had just come back from Hades. But this is scarcely the hand of a *revenant*, if I may be allowed an opinion in the matter.'

'It seems incredible that you should have found me out in this place,' answered Gerald as the two shook hands.

'Incredible? Peh! I had need to see you; and I am here.'

'Will you not be seated?'

As Karovsky drew up a chair, Clara made a sign to her aunt, and the two ladies passed out through the folding-doors into the room beyond.

'Pardon,' said the Russian as he glanced around, 'but this place seems scarcely a fit home either for madame or yourself.'

'You know that I am in hiding; you doubtless also know that a large reward is offered for my capture?'—The other nodded.—'While such is the case, it is impossible for me to touch a penny of my income. My wife's aunt has lost her property by a bank failure. We are very poor, Karovsky; but there are worse ills in life than poverty.'

'Part of my errand to-night is to tell you that I have instructions to place certain funds at your disposal. You can leave this place to-morrow, if it please you so to do.'

'Thanks, Karovsky; but I cannot accept a penny of the money you offer me.'

'How! Not accept! But this is folly.'

'It may seem so to you; but that does not alter the matter.'

'It is unaccountable,' said the Russian with a lifting of his black eyebrows. 'But why remain in these wretched apartments? Why not go abroad—on the Continent—to America—anywhere? The world is wide, and there are places where you would be far safer than here.'

'I doubt it. One reason why I am here is because I believe this spot—in the heart of one of the most populous quarters of London—to be as safe a hiding-place as any I could find. My other reason is that were I to go abroad, I feel as if I should be throwing away my last faint hope of ever being able to prove my innocence to the world.'

Karovsky stared at him in wide-eyed amazement. 'How! Your'—

'My innocence of the murder of Baron von Rosenberg.'

'Pardon; I fail to comprehend.'

'When we parted last, I told you clearly and emphatically that, let the consequences to myself be whatever they might, mine should not be the hand to strike the fatal blow; but when you left me, you evidently did so in the belief that in a little while I should change my mind, and that of the two alternatives you had placed before me, I should choose the one which you yourself would in all probability have chosen had you been in my place. Time went on, and, within the period you had prescribed, Von Rosenberg was found dead, shot through the heart. Such being the case, it was perhaps a not unnatural conclusion for you to arrive at that it was I, Gerald Brooke, who was the assassin.—But I ask you, Karovsky, to believe in the truth of what I am now going to tell you. I had no more to do with the death of Von Rosenberg than you yourself had.'

'Est-il possible!' exclaimed the Russian in a voice scarcely raised above a whisper. For a few moments he sat staring silently at Gerald; then he went on: 'Not often am I astonished at anything I hear; but you, Gerald Brooke, have astonished me to-night. The evidence against you seemed so conclusive, that I never doubted Von Rosenberg fell by your hand. Yet more than once I said to myself: "What an imbecile

Brooke must have been to leave behind him such a condemnatory piece of evidence as the weapon with which he did the deed!"—But who, then, was the individual who so kindly spared you a necessity so painful?"

"That I know no more than you do."

"C'est un vrai mystère."

"From day to day I live in hope that the real criminal will be discovered and brought to justice; but with each day that passes that hope grows fainter within me."

"I know not what to say.—When I remember the past, and when I look round and think that this is now the home of you and madame!"—He spread out his hands with a gesture more expressive than words.

Before more could be said, there came a peculiar knock at the door—three taps in quick succession, followed by a fourth after a longer interval. At the sound, Clara and Miss Primby emerged from the other room.

"That summons is intended for me," said Karovsky quickly as he rose and opened the door.

Then those inside saw that a man, a stranger, was standing on the landing, who seemed to retire further into the shade the moment the light fell on him. He said something rapidly in a low voice to Karovsky, to which the latter replied in the same language. Then the Russian gave a nod as of dismissal, and closing the door, turned and confronted Gerald with a grave face and distended eyes. "That man is one of us," he said. "When I entered the house, I left him on watch outside. He now comes to tell me that a policeman in plain clothes is on guard outside the court, and that another is stationed inside, so that no one can pass in or out without being observed. He also tells me that there are two more constables in uniform patrolling the street close by; and that from what he can gather, they are waiting the arrival of some one, probably a superior officer. Is it possible, Brooke, that you can be the quarry on which they intend presently to swoop?"

"There can be little doubt of it," answered Gerald, who had risen to his feet while Karovsky was speaking. He had turned very pale; but his lips were firm-set, and the expression which shone out of his eyes was something far removed from craven fear.

Clara stood with one hand resting on the table, her frame trembling slightly. Was the blow she had dreaded so long about to fall at last?

Miss Primby sat down with a gasp.

"Well, let them come," went on Gerald after a moment's pause. "It will be better so. I am tired of this life of hide-and-seek. Why not end it here and now?"

"No, no!" cried his wife. "Even at this, the eleventh hour, there must surely be some way of escape."

"Even if I were eager to escape, which I am not, I know of none."

"Madame is right," said the Russian in his impressive tones. "There is still one way of escape."

"And that is?"—said Gerald interrogatively.

But before Karovsky could reply, Margery, breathless and dishevelled, burst into the room. "O Muster Geril!—O mun," she exclaimed, "the polis is in the court—four or five of 'em, and I

believe they're coming here. But I shut and bolted the door at the bottom of the stairs; and it'll take 'em some time to break that down," added the girl with a chuckle.

Picot, who was on his way down-stairs as Margery rushed up, had overheard her words, and he could now be seen dimly outlined on the landing, his eyes piercing the obscurity like two points of flame; but for the moment no one observed him.

THE TRINITY PILOTS.

BY R. H. MC CARTHY.

VERY many of those who are familiar with the somewhat imposing stone building near the head of Tower Hill, known as Trinity House, have but a hazy idea of the use to which the structure is put, or of the functions of the body whose habitation it is. After moving from Deptford to Ratcliffe Highway, thence to Stepney, and afterwards to Water Lane, in the City, where it was twice burnt out, the corporation, thus described in a charter granted by Henry VIII., in 1798 erected the present building: "The Masters, Wardens, and Assistants of the Guild, Fraternity, or Brotherhood of the Most Glorious and Undivided Trinity, and of St Clement in the parish of Deptford Strond, in the county of Kent." The first Master was Sir Thomas Spert, commander of the famous *Great Harry*, which carried Henry and his splendid retinue as far as Calais on their way to the Field of the Cloth of Gold. This charter permitted the mariners of England to form a guild, which might include women, and empowered it to make laws for shipping, and to punish offenders against such laws. Subsequent monarchs widened the sphere of the society. In the eighth year of Elizabeth, for instance, there was passed an Act, which, after describing the corporation as "a company of the chiefest and most expert masters and governors of ships, charged with the conduction of the Queen's Majesty's navy," and bound to see to the supply of ships and men for Her Majesty's service, laments the loss of life caused by the destruction of marks along the coast, and authorises the Trinity Brethren (as the members were and are called) to preserve and erect beacons for the guidance of ships.

Further extensions were made by James II., the most important being with reference to pilotage. The king, having ascertained that serious loss of life and property arose from the incompetency of pilots, forbade the latter to take charge of ships in the Thames or Medway, unless provided with licenses from the Trinity House, confirmed by the Lord High Admiral; and a deduction from the earnings of pilots holding licenses was sanctioned, with a view to forming a pension fund. Acts of the 48th and 52d of George III. directed the corporation to license cutters to cruise with pilots off the coast, and to appoint sub-commissioners where there was already no pilotage authority. Side by side with the growth of its pilotage duties, the powers of the Fraternity with regard to beacons increased; and ultimately, by purchase from the Crown and from private owners, it obtained the sole right to levy duties upon shipping for the maintenance of lights on

the coast of England. But this, as well as other branches of the work of the Guild, is outside the scope of our paper.

In 1853 the power of the corporation had reached its zenith. It managed a large income of some three hundred thousand pounds a year with a minimum of inconvenience to the community, and to the great advantage of the charities attached to the society. Committees of the House of Commons had in 1822, 1834, and 1845 investigated its business, and on each occasion the brethren emerged from the ordeal with credit. Still, it was against the spirit of the age that a self-elected, irresponsible body should tax shipping, even for charitable purposes; and by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 the corporation was shorn of much of its power. From bequests and other sources, considerable property had been derived, and was employed in supporting almshouses and out-pensioners. This was left untouched; but the brethren were made responsible to the Board of Trade for everything connected with light dues and pilotage, and the disposal of the revenue thus obtained vested in that body. But though subject to this control, the functions of the Trinity House remain highly important. Nautical men are flattered when invited to become 'elder' or 'younger' brethren, high personages have been glad to accept honorary membership, and a royal Duke is proud of his position as Master.

The Act of Parliament just referred to amalgamated with the Trinity House of Deptford Strond a similar institution at the Cinque Ports, over which the Lord Warden presided; but three other Houses remained, as venerable if not so powerful as that on Tower Hill. At Hull, Newcastle, and Leith, Shipmen's Guilds existed at a very early date, which were virtually friendly societies, and this character they all preserved when the possession of royal charters increased their power and wealth and made them more useful to trade. The Trinity Houses of Hull and Leith were legally recognised in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and the present charter of the Hull Guild is dated 1537. The Leith Trinity House licenses pilots for the Firth of Forth, the North Sea, and for the coast as far south as Orford Ness, in Suffolk. That of Newcastle up to 1864 held sway over the pilotage, lighting, and buoyage of the Tyne, and of the coast from Holy Island to Whitby, eight hundred pilots owning its authority. But Hartlepool and Sunderland obtained permission to manage their own affairs, and the Tyne has been placed under elective bodies, so that hardly anything remains to the Trinity House. The Hull Guild retains the management of the Humber pilotage and of the streams flowing into it; and besides other powers, it has that of licensing pilots for the Baltic, the North Sea, and for the coast between Whitby and Orford Ness, where the authority of the Deptford Strond House commences.

Omitting the legal boundaries and divisions, the latter fraternity practically has charge of the pilotage between Orford Ness, southward and westward, to the Bristol Channel, and of the harbours between. Though the importance of its lighthouse duties has overshadowed its position as a pilotage authority, it will be seen that with this as with the other corporations, the pro-

vision of pilots was one of its main, perhaps its primary function. Indeed, that was so before any charter was obtained; for from an early period the Fraternity maintained a pilotage station for outward-bound vessels at Deptford and at Leigh, near Southend, for ships entering the Thames. It was also in their capacity of master-pilots that in 1797 some of the Elder Brethren of Deptford Strond personally, by night, removed the buoys in the Nore, and thereby did much to quell the sailors' mutiny; and in the same capacity they took on themselves the defence of the Thames in 1803. As pilots, too, they escorted the Queen on her voyage to Scotland with Prince Albert in 1842; and on the occasion of naval reviews their yacht is privileged to precede the royal procession. There are numberless other pilotage authorities in the United Kingdom; but they are mere mushrooms, things of yesterday, whose rules are usually copied from those of the Trinity Houses, especially that of Deptford Strond. It may be of interest to glance at that system, the result as it is of many centuries of experience.

In early times the pilot was simply the steersman, and the references to that official in classical literature must be so understood. The word is of Dutch origin, and meant a person who conducted a vessel with the assistance of a sounding-line; but the legal definition given in the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 is, 'any person not belonging to a ship who has charge of it.' The importance of such aid to shipmasters has been recognised from the infancy of commerce; and the maritime laws known as the *Ordonnances de Wisbuy*, enacted in the twelfth century, and adopted by most European countries, made the employment of local pilots compulsory. The present state of our law is that all vessels above sixty tons engaged in the foreign trade, and all home-trade ships—that is, those plying from one British port to another, or to any part of Europe north of Brest—carrying passengers, are obliged to take a legally qualified pilot. Obviously, then, it becomes the duty of the legislature to provide pilots, a task which the Trinity House performs, directly as regards the district between Orford Ness and Dungeness, and through sub-commissioners over the remainder of its jurisdiction. By itself or its deputies, the Deptford Strond corporation rules nearly nine hundred pilots.

Any seaman is eligible for a pilot's license; but those who have served an apprenticeship to the calling get a preference, and as there is usually an ample supply of ex-apprentices, this is practically the only road to the position. The youth, who must be above fourteen when indentured, serves seven years, during which he may be employed as a fisherman, a yachtsman, or even on board a trader; but he is expected to occasionally spend a little time on board one of the pilot-cutters belonging to the port for which he seeks a license. Then, on a vacancy occurring, he among others is examined as to his knowledge of local waters, and in seamanship—'the method of staying or wearing a vessel, the complete management of a ship in bad weather and narrow channels, to be able to bring her properly to an anchor, to keep a clear anchor, and to know how to get her under weigh in all situations.' If successful, he pays a fee,

usually two guineas, enters into bond for one hundred pounds as a guarantee against any loss brought about by his neglect, and receiving a license, is appointed to a cutter. The Trinity pilot is also required to pay two guineas a year for the renewal of his license, and to contribute two and a half per cent. on his earnings towards the Pilot Fund. This Fund has a capital of ninety thousand pounds, and out of it infirm members get an allowance varying according to length of service from ten to sixteen pounds per annum. Widows of pilots receive from four to six pounds, and children twenty-four shillings per annum. In the London district these allowances are more liberal. Necessarily, the pilot is under rigid discipline. To keep a public-house, or a shop for the sale of dutiable articles, is forbidden to him, and drunkenness or other misconduct is severely dealt with. Pilots are expected to take care that the quarantine laws are not infringed, and on them local authorities depend to see that their regulations are adhered to by shipmasters.

There is one important exception to the law of compulsory pilotage. A master or mate can, upon passing an examination and paying the same fees as the regular pilots, obtain a license to navigate any vessel belonging to his employer 'without incurring any penalty for the non-employment of a qualified pilot.' This privilege, which is extensively availed of, is resented by the Trinity pilots, to whom it is a serious blow. At Hull, the matter is made worse by the fact that many of the persons so licensed are foreigners. No doubt, as pilots say, one of the objects for which the Trinity House was chartered was to prevent foreigners from becoming acquainted with our harbours; but if these men be sufficiently acquainted with the Humber to pass an examination in its navigation, it is not easy to see how the withholding of a license will prevent them from guiding a foreign ship-of-war. That, by the way. It is said that an Act of the early part of the present century, dealing with a single article, madder, was admirably drawn except in one respect—it did not mention madder at all. A measure is now (August) being passed through parliament, one clause of which rectifies a somewhat similar omission in the Shipping Act of 1854. Section 340 relieves qualified masters and mates from penalties, as quoted above, and was intended, of course, to exempt them from payment of pilotage dues, which, indeed, was the primary object of the section. But it left them liable; and now, after thirty-five years, the error is being amended by the insertion of the words, 'or without incurring any liability for the payment of pilotage dues.'

There is a certain uniformity in the Trinity House pilotage system throughout its jurisdiction, and in order to see it at work it will suffice to glance at one of the English Channel ports—say Plymouth. There are there six cutters of from thirty to fifty tons, each carrying five pilots and two men, the latter becoming necessary when the pilots have been one by one drafted into ships requiring their services. The profits are divided into twenty-four parts; the vessel, a pilot, and a man receiving respectively five, three, and two parts. By a rule of old standing, the details of which the pilots settle among themselves, three cutters cruise in a semicircle with a radius of twelve or fifteen miles; a fourth patrols the

entrance to the harbour; a fifth is within, ready to take the place of any cutter denuded of its crew; and the pilots of the sixth are off duty. These several places are held by each vessel in turn. The first time the writer saw a Plymouth pilot-boat was when approaching the harbour some years ago in a coasting steamer. A stiff south-west wind was piling water against the cliffs, and the breakwater could only be traced by a line of foam. A column of smoke became visible far out, near the Eddystone lighthouse, and a large steamer hove in sight, heading for Plymouth. On coming nearer, the union-jack—in nautical parlance 'the jack'—was hoisted to the foretopgallant-mast head; and as if awaiting the signal, from behind a sheltering headland a little yacht-like vessel stole, a red and white flag, the colours divided horizontally, at her masthead. On getting clear of the friendly promontory, she heeled over, almost burying a huge P (the initial letter of the port must be six feet long) which, with a number, disfigured her white mainsail, and then righting, flew seaward, now diving beneath a great green billow, or now climbing what seemed a perpendicular wall of water. The two vessels met; the pilot-boat described a sharp curve, the mainsail fell, and she swung round under the lee of the great steamer, which had meanwhile slowed. In a moment a small boat was dancing on the waves, and into it three men sprang, one of whom had donned a uniform of bright blue with brass buttons; and we watched with anxiety the perilous voyage to the rope-ladder which hung over the steamer's high black side. Hardly had the propeller begun to revolve before the rowers were again on board their own craft, and the little vessel hurrying across the dark threatening sea to meet a foreign-looking brig which was beating towards Plymouth.

It was a good day; perhaps a week would pass before they should meet another vessel. For the steamer, which had a draught of twenty-four feet, three pounds twelve shillings were received; and from the brig, rather less than half that amount, the men who actually piloted the ships receiving an eighth. The earnings of pilots vary so much that it would be difficult to give an average. Some of the London men receive over eight hundred pounds per annum—occasionally more than one thousand pounds is earned within the year—and a few large incomes are made in the Southampton district. On the other hand, at many of the smaller outports the average earnings do not exceed a pound per week. The large sums just named are obtained through the operation of the 'choice' system, by which the great steamship companies select pilots for their work. No doubt this good fortune is won honestly; still, where most are worthy and all are competent, selection looks like undue favouritism, and there will always remain a suspicion that to fee a shipping-clerk is more efficacious than merit. On the whole, in spite of these prizes, the pilot's calling, laborious, dangerous, and highly responsible as it is, is an ill-paid one. The 'palmy days' of pilotage are gone. A Cunarder or Orient liner carries four or six times as much cargo as the foreign-going barque of thirty years ago, and pays but little more; masters and mates qualified to pilot their own ships are becoming each year more numerous; and for some time legislation has been

the foe of a body of men who are regarded as monopolists.

Several attempts have been made to totally abolish compulsory pilotage, and Mr Chamberlain, when President of the Board of Trade, brought in a bill for the purpose. But a great vested interest had to be dealt with; it would cost some millions to compensate the present pilots and owners of cutters, and the project was dropped. There is much difference of opinion as to the merits of the compulsory system. On the one hand, there is so great an improvement in the lighting and buoyage of our shores and harbours, and charts have attained such excellence, that the highly educated men commanding large ocean steamers learn in their frequent voyages almost as much of channels and currents as the local pilots. There is a good deal to be said against forcing these men to pay for services they do not require; but, on the other hand, such officers can, if they desire, provide themselves with licenses, while the present system assures to the foreigner and the less confident navigator reliable assistance. Besides, the obligation to take a pilot is not more galling than the prohibition to load a vessel beyond a certain point, the government interference in agreements between master and crew, the official inspection of emigrants' food, or any of the hundred other steps the legislature has found it necessary to take in connection with shipping, in order to repress the recklessness of avarice in its dealings with human life. However, compulsory pilotage is probably doomed. Henceforward, every owner of a cutter and every pilot will, on receiving a license, be required to resign all claim to compensation in the event of the abolition of compulsory pilotage; and with the extinction of the present holders of licenses, the opportunity of the iconoclast will come. One step more, a step hotly urged, and with forcible arguments—the abolition of light dues on ships—and the *raison d'être* of the Trinity House will cease; and the besom of progress will then doubtless sweep away a most interesting survival of the infancy of English commerce.

A LEGAL SECRET.

BY THOMAS ST E. HAKE.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAP. I.—CONSCIENCE-STRICKEN.

THE house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, from which the firm of Trench, Pilkington, and Trench addressed their numerous clients, was getting quite antiquated. It had stood there a century or more. Discreetly placed a little distance back from the roadway, like most of the legal houses in Lincoln's Inn, its angular architecture somewhat resembled a tumble-down house of cards; there were balconies, outside barred windows, upon which no one ever ventured to trust his weight, and there were stunted gables half-hidden by projecting walls. Upon the topmost gable was a weathercock; and this vane, pointing towards the north-west, reminded one that a gust of wind from that quarter might any day blow the old house down, as it had threatened to do already more than once; and would have done but for

the support of a more modern building on each side.

There had been many changes since the first deed of partnership between Trench, Pilkington, and Trench had been signed; for sometimes a Pilkington was senior partner, sometimes a Trench. But the designation of this legal firm had always remained unaltered. It had been known as Trench, Pilkington, and Trench time out of mind, and so it was still described. There had always been a trustworthy representative—always bearing either the name of Trench or of Pilkington, and always gifted with an acute ear for confiding clients.

For a day seldom passed but what some one driving up in his carriage brought with him a weighty secret; and the head of the house, whether young or old, was always there with his wits about him prepared to accept the trust. Before one partner showed any sign of superannuation, as it was shrewdly observed, another was skilfully trained to step into his place; so you might confide your secrets to the firm of Trench, Pilkington, and Trench with the same sense of security which you experienced when placing your money in the Bank.

The senior partner's room was large and oblong in shape, and with three dismal windows in a row; for these windows had iron bars, and the dust upon them was an efficient substitute for blinds. Between the bars could be seen a blurred forest of distorted chimneys. At the end of the room was a huge fireplace; and before the fire, which was burning brightly, was a great brass guard. It was an ideal chamber for the safe deposit of secrets; the walls were hidden by shelves, and on these shelves stood deed-boxes, some with names in full, others with the initials only painted upon them. At a desk, between the barred windows and the guarded hearth, sat an old man.

If any one ever looked like a living embodiment of secrecy that could not be tampered with, this lawyer looked it from head to foot. His white shaggy eyebrows hung over his eyes and seemed almost to hide them: it was difficult to get more than an occasional flash from them—difficult to judge whether they were small or large. His nose was narrow, long, and hooked like a hawk's; and the thin lips were pressed together as if they had been sealed. He seemed at least fourscore years of age. The expression on his face appeared to imply that he had chosen the same motto as the Prince de Condé, and had based his character on the word 'Listen!'

It was growing dusk. As the lawyer placed his hand upon the bell at his side, the door opened, and in came a young man whose frank face was in striking contrast to the senior partner's. The old lawyer leaned back in his chair, and although he did not open his lips or even look up, his face plainly expressed these words: 'Well—what is it? I am listening.'

The young man, Sidney Trench, held a letter in his hand. He glanced at it as he stood over the fire, and then at Mr Pilkington. 'I have a little matter to settle,' said he, 'in Chancery Lane. I will not keep you waiting, sir; the carriage is at the door.' The old lawyer was Sidney's guardian. Mr Pilkington's villa, in one of the suburbs, was the young man's home;

it had been his home since boyhood. Again Sidney looked at the letter, and then handed it to the senior partner.

It was quite dusk now. Mr Pilkington, turning his back to the window, sat with his face towards the fire. He took the letter and said: 'What is this?' He bent his head over it. Could he read by that uncertain light? The expression on his face seemed to darken; the eyebrows contracted, and there was a slight trembling of the lips. Or was it the changeful reflection of the fire that appeared even to draw the colour from his cheeks? 'What is this?' he repeated.

'We are short of clerks,' Sidney explained, 'and I have heard of one, living near Chancery Lane, who is likely to suit. This is a letter strongly recommending him.'

Mr Pilkington tossed the letter angrily upon the table. 'We have enough—too many clerks already. Make them come earlier: keep them later at their desks!'

Sidney Trench deliberated a moment before making any reply.

'This man, Abel Norris,' he then ventured to plead, 'is a most deserving character. Besides,' he added, 'the poor fellow is almost destitute'—

'Sidney,' interrupted Mr Pilkington, 'how old are you now?'

'Twenty-four.'

'Ah! At twenty-one I became a partner. —Do you know that I shall be eighty this spring?'

'Yes; and I often think that you need more rest.'

'How can I take rest?' replied Mr Pilkington —'how can I think of retiring, while you are so young?—I do not mean in years,' he hastened to add—'I mean in worldly wisdom. You are too soft-hearted, Sidney, too easily impressed.'

Sidney smiled, but made no answer.

'When your grandfather died, placing me so early in life at the head of this firm, do you suppose I occupied myself with the troubles of destitute clerks? No, sir; I gave my mind to the affairs of clients; I listened to *their* troubles—family troubles, Sidney, of a very grave nature. I still listen to them day after day.' Mr Pilkington paused. For a moment, leaning his head against his hand, he looked as if all the accumulated troubles of distinguished clients to whom he had given ear for more than half a century were crowding upon him and bowing him down. 'To save great families from ruin—often from disgrace,' he presently resumed, 'is *our* business. Talk to me about that, Sidney, if you will; that is a subject which concerns us; not so your destitute clerks.'

From an intimate acquaintance with the aristocracy and their private affairs, ever since he was a young man, Mr Pilkington had learnt to worship rank. There were so many great families in the United Kingdom, so many members of the Upper House, whose secrets were locked up in his brain. But he had never been known to display indifference for the condition of those equal or beneath him in station; and Sidney Trench was puzzled to discover an adequate reason for his present attitude. It was so trivial a subject. A clerk, Abel Norris, had been asked to call. Sidney was too busy to see him; but he

had promised to look in upon the man after business hours. No motive, except the wish to aid a deserving character, had entered into his calculations. He hardly knew how to excuse his purpose to his senior where no excuse appeared requisite.

'I merely mentioned the clerk, sir,' said the young man in a conciliatory tone, 'as a reason for not driving back with you this evening. There is sometimes business connected with our clients upon which you wish to converse with me on our way home.'

But Mr Pilkington made no reply; he appeared lost in thought. Never had Sidney perceived a sign of mental abstraction in the old lawyer before. Men who are keenly occupied in the business of life are seldom absent-minded. The senior partner, from years of training, had an unlimited power of attention. Nothing was ever known to escape him. Again the young man regarded him with surprise and perplexity.

Presently, Mr Pilkington looked up. 'Come to me in the library after dinner,' said he; 'we will have some talk together there.' Then he suddenly added: 'I suppose this clerk has a large family dependent upon him?'

'No; only one daughter.'

Deeper shadows seemed to gather over the old man's face. But the shadows of night were also gathering outside, and the senior partner's room would have been almost dark but for the fire which was still burning though less brightly.

'Have the kindness,' said he as Sidney went towards the door, 'to send some one to light my lamp.'

When Mr Pilkington's lamp had been lighted and he was once more alone, he grew still more thoughtful. But at length he roused himself, tied up the documents on his desk, and rose from his chair. There was a green baize door opposite the windows. Mr Pilkington stepped softly towards this door and placed his hand upon the knob. He had to exert some effort to open it; for it fitted so completely that no voice, no conversation, could penetrate beyond. It opened with a muffled sound; and just behind was another door of dark oak. This he also opened, and entered a small octagonal chamber. It was an anteroom leading out upon the principal staircase; it was here that clients with matters for the senior's private ear waited his pleasure. But there was no one waiting now. The secrets of that day were all confided and locked away. It was now night, but not dark without; for through the window, barred and blindless like the windows in Mr Pilkington's room, the light from the crescent moon looked in over the crooked chimneys and down upon the senior partner as he took a bunch of keys from his pocket and opened a black deed-box standing amongst a number of others on the shelf.

The anxious expression which Mr Pilkington often had occasion to observe on the faces of his clients was now upon *his* face. It appeared as if some secret of his own oppressed him. Was that possible? Was it possible that this man, who had listened all his life to the secrets of other people without a sign of emotion, had a secret of his own? His hand trembled as he unlocked the deed-box, a box on which the name 'Rosamond Gage' was written; and in that moment of agitation the

thought doubtless crossed his mind of how much others had suffered while waiting here in this anteroom—waiting to be received by him; how bitterly many of them must have reviewed the irrevocable past—a past that contained all the painful details that these clients were ever eager to place before him! It was their business to save, as he had declared to Sidney Trench, great families from disgrace. Was Mr Pilkington meditating as to the best means of saving himself from being stigmatised by his family? He took from the box a bundle of letters and went back in his noiseless manner to his own room. Suddenly his agitation turned to anger. He raised his arm, as if an impulse to burn the packet had seized upon him. But the intervening guard, which had protected many a legal paper from the flames, seemed to recall him. 'No,' he muttered, with a stern look on his face, as though he were forcing an acknowledgment upon himself; 'she is not dead; it is not too late even now.'

For a moment he stood with his lips compressed and his shaggy eyebrows tightly contracted; and that intense listening look once more came over his face. Was he listening to his own conscience at last?

As the lawyer drove home through the west-end, where his clients lived in great squares and gardens, he sat in the corner of his carriage with his head bent, in a stern and brooding attitude. He took no heed of these mansions, with their brilliantly lighted rooms and aristocratic assemblages; to-night they brought no expressive smile to his face as he passed; he was not thinking about these people's secrets—secrets which if revealed might have filled the guests with consternation, and put every one to flight—he had other matters to ponder.

Mr Pilkington did not even glance out of window until his carriage reached an open heath. He then lowered the sash and drew a deep breath, as if the silence and moonlight which surrounded him were best suited to his present mood. The carriage presently reached the gates, which led through a winding avenue to the lawyer's villa. Upon a pedestal, on each side of the gateway, reposed a stony sphinx; and the lamps in front threw an uncertain light upon these grotesque figures. Even this old lawyer's face scarcely expressed more solemnity than the faces of these sphinxes; he might have caught their look and kept it, as fitted to his peculiar mental condition.

At a later hour of the same evening, as he sat in his easy-chair by the drawing-room fire, the lawyer's mood appeared but slightly changed. His eyebrows were still sternly knit; but there was a less compressed expression about his mouth, as if he were endeavouring to force himself to unlock some secret storeroom in his brain.

At an escritoire, on which there stood a shaded lamp, was seated a handsome woman. Glancing towards her, at last Mr Pilkington said: 'My dear, will you give me your attention for a few minutes?'

Mrs Pilkington at once put down her pen and wheeled her chair nearer the hearth. And as she bent her beautiful dark eyes upon the old man—some forty years her senior—there was a look in them of trust and devotion.

'I was thinking on my way home to-night,'

Mr Pilkington began in an unusually serious tone, 'about an incident which happened this afternoon. It appeared at first trivial; but it may be no such slight affair; it may lead to very painful disclosures. But much will depend, my dear, on your attitude. That is my opinion; much will depend upon that.'

An intensely troubled look came over the wife's face. She waited for Mr Pilkington to continue. She was too overcome to question him. The colour had left her cheeks; and although her lips were parted, as if she were listening with suddenly awakened dread, she scarcely drew breath.

But the lawyer seemed to expect no reply; he stopped only to ponder his own words. He did not raise his eyes—it was not Mr Pilkington's way, except on the rarest occasions.

'There is nothing, believe me, that need alarm you,' he presently resumed, as if conscious of her agitation; 'for when I observe that much will depend upon you, my dear, I ought to feel reassured; to feel otherwise would be to doubt your goodness of heart—to doubt even your readiness to forgive.'

As he spoke, Mr Pilkington drew from his pocket the packet of letters which he had taken from the deed-box in the moonlit anteroom that very evening.

'I have no wish to be mysterious,' the lawyer went on; 'but it has been my fortune in life—my destiny—to be the caretaker of other people's mysteries or misfortunes. Yes; it has been my fate. And yet, what lesson have I learnt? None. Is not enough that I am forced to keep the secrets of our clients? It should seem so. But no; I must needs keep a secret of my own'—Mr Pilkington tapped the packet in his hand—'and it is contained in these letters. They will explain all that you have a right to know. And when you have read them—and I fear you will be deeply pained by the perusal—I shall ask you to listen, as I am sure you will, while I express my contrition, for I never can justify my conduct.'

With a trembling hand Mr Pilkington held the packet towards his wife. She took it with manifest reluctance. The look of trust had not yet left her face. It was evident that more than mere words even from her own husband's lips were needed in order to destroy the confidence she had placed in him ever since their marriage some fifteen years ago.

'I will not read them,' said she, holding the packet impulsively towards him. 'If you have thought it wiser to keep this secret from me, my dear husband, these letters are better placed among those deeds which do not belong to our life. For some good reason, I can never doubt, you have kept this secret. Let it be forgotten; let it be between us as if you had never referred to this subject. I shall always think of you, as I always have done, as a man of honour in whom every one places the utmost reliance. Why do you try to shake my belief in you?'

'For your own sake,' was the lawyer's reply; 'for your own happiness.'

Mr Pilkington's wife sank back in her chair, deeply perplexed, with the packet still clasped in her hands. How could the awakening of distrust in her husband bring happiness to her? She had married him when she was barely seven-and-

twenty, and he was then past the prime of life—sixty or more. But his love for her—she had always felt that—was one of genuine devotion. If he had a fault, it was one which most women will condone: he was jealous of every look or word she bestowed on others. But in his constant effort to conquer this weakness—the only weakness in his character—he had gained her admiration.

After a moment's silence, while looking thoughtfully at the packet, she spoke in a low voice. 'Let these letters be destroyed,' said she, casting a glance at the fire. 'I feel that to read them would be to raise some barrier between us. I have had one great trouble; I could not bear another.'

The lawyer made no reply; but a quaint expression passed over his face, as if his wife's words had touched him more deeply than was intended.

'I could not bear,' she resumed, 'to believe you distressed with the thought that in keeping one secret from me you had lessened my affection for you. Let me imagine—whether right or wrong—that your motive was a good one. It must have been! Few men have keener judgment. In your wisdom and supreme knowledge of the world, you decided to do what you have done; you have kept this one deed—whatever it may be—hidden from me. Let it be forgotten.' And as she spoke she rose from her chair, and stepping quickly towards the hearth, knelt down before the fire and dropped the packet into the blaze. 'There!' said she, 'It is forgotten. There is no secret that divides us now.'

Mr Pilkington in his motionless attitude watches the flames. The red tape which binds the packet grows black and breaks asunder; and then the scorched letters partially unfold themselves, and expose to view detached sentences and syllables as they curl into grotesque shapes. He never takes his eyes off the fire, but sits there lost in thought, even when every flimsy particle has sunk among the red-hot coals and vanished.

TELEGRAPHIC BLUNDERS.

'GET rid of Emma at once; exposure imminent.' Such were the contents, startling and unexpected, of a telegram opened by the wife of one of our City men during his absence. How many sighs and tears, how much doubt and anguish resulted, and with what difficulty and persuasion, incredulity was overcome and confidence restored, who shall tell. Suffice it that tears gave way to laughter when it was explained that 'Emma' was the name of a big mine in America, and the mysterious message only a hint to sell out shares in that notorious undertaking.

There was no blunder, telegraphic or otherwise, in the transmission of the above message, but it will serve as an example of the ambiguity of the modern business telegram. Nine out of ten of the messages passing to-day between business houses are so abbreviated, so full of technical terms, as to be an absolutely unknown language to any one outside the particular business concerned.

There is no occasion whatever to condemn this practice; indeed, the manifold advantages secured by the use of abbreviated or code telegrams, principally as regards economy and secrecy, immeasur-

ably outweigh the disadvantages of occasional misunderstandings. It must, however, be admitted that a slight telegraphic blunder which would not affect the sense of a plainly worded message, might entirely obscure or alter the meaning of an abbreviated or ambiguous one. The person who despatched the comforting assurance, 'made all right,' could not, of course, foresee that the failure of two little signals would transform his message into the alarming statement, 'mad all night;' but the economist who condensed the same meaning into the single word 'settled' could not loudly complain that the message as delivered contained the unmeaning and somewhat irritating word 'nettled.'

The blunders of the telegraph arise from more than one cause. In addition to those produced by indistinct or illiterate writing, a very large number are due to mechanical or electrical faults in the apparatus or on the line. The Morse code or alphabet, by means of which the pulsations of the electric current are read, is, as most people are aware, composed of dots and dashes, or rather short and long signals, combinations of which in different orders and quantities form the letters of the alphabet. These signals are liable to mutilation in three ways: by 'failing,' or the loss of a signal; by 'sticking,' or the running together of two signals; and by 'splitting,' or the breaking up of one signal into two or more. To illustrate this, let us take the letter 'R,' which is expressed by a dot, a dash, and a dot - - - By the accidental omission of the first or last dot, it would become either - N, or - A. By the running together of two signals it would again, although not perfectly, become - N, or - A, while the splitting up of the dash would transform it into H - - - When it is remembered that all of these faults may be, and occasionally are, present at the same time, the mystery of some telegraphic blunders is explained.

A few years ago a message was received at a certain town in the north of England addressed, 'The Chief Baconstable.' Unfortunately, the contents afforded no clue to its destination, and after going round to all the Baconstors in the town, it was reported as 'undelivered.' Speedily came the corrected address, 'The Chief-Constable.' In this case the hyphen between the two words being badly signalled was translated 'Ba' and tacked on to the next word. This faulty signalling, or, as it is technically called, 'bad spacing,' is another fruitful source of error. In conjunction with a badly written letter, it produced the address 'Mice Cavern,' instead of 'Mitre Tavern;' and in transmitting the report of a lecture on 'Poetry,' made the lecturer refer with enthusiasm to the 'tender melody of cats,' which should, it is scarcely necessary to add, have read 'Keats.' Another lecturer, dealing with the 'Growth of happiness,' had the title converted into the 'Groans of happiness'—a somewhat peculiar error, but one well within the bounds of possibility.

A well-known refreshment caterer in Manchester received an order from a school manager for four hundred *beans*. This order he transferred to a greengrocer, and it was only on inquiry being made as to the real quantity required, that an error was discovered. The original order was for four hundred *buns*. A student, anxiously

awaiting the result of an examination, was not relieved from suspense on receipt of a telegram containing the words, 'First or last.' Luckily, a repetition of the message corrected this, substituting the gratifying intelligence, 'First on list.' A gentleman telegraphed to his servant, 'Get me good seat theatre to-night,' and was not very well pleased on his arrival to find an orthodox theatre *hat* provided, but no *seat*.

During a meeting of the British Association some years ago, a sermon was preached by a reverend savant. The preacher's text, as reported by the telegraph, was taken from 'The *Acas* of the Apostles,' and one of his sentences read, 'the soups of just men, made perfect.'

Who has not heard or read of the party telegraphing for his *coat* and receiving a *cow*, or of the gentleman absent from home, informed of the birth of a box! Here are, however, other versions of these cases, rather more circumstantial, although probably not more authentic. A reporter absent from home on business, wired for his *new coat*. Reply: 'What do you mean by *neat cow*? Don't understand your message.'

It is, however, in dealing with press or newspaper work, in which the dangers of indistinct writing are enhanced by the system of abbreviations used by reporters, that the great majority of telegraphic blunders are committed. Fortunately, indeed, is it that there stands between the copy and the public the all-knowing, long-suffering sub-editor, else would the newspaper hold a lower place in the world than it does to-day. What, for instance, would be thought of the paper which, publishing a well-known politician's speech, closed it with the extraordinary words, 'All things come to the man with warts!' or of the sporting print which allowed it to become public that Lamia would not run at Newmarket, as she was 'touched in the mind!'

The telegraphist engaged during a big cricket match had perhaps some excuse for describing the pause for refreshment as 'the luncheon internal' instead of 'interval,' but what can be urged for the man who, in the middle of a prosaic provision market report, alleged that 'well *curld hairs* not over fifteen pounds-weight realised good prices!' It cost the press-man an extra thought to discover that 'well *cured hams*' were the articles reported on.

Not many months ago, a prominent party-leader, speaking in the provinces, mentioned by name a number of local gentlemen, praising them for their zeal and industry in the cause, adding, as an emphasis: 'These are all friends, old well-known friends.' What would have been the feelings of the speaker, or of those mentioned, had the report appeared in the newspaper exactly as it was telegraphed—that is, 'These are all frauds, old well-known frauds!' In describing a horse-race, the reporter wrote, rather indistinctly, it is presumed, 'The favourite made all the running, and won by two lengths.' The telegraphist who signalled the message was evidently not of a 'sporting turn,' as the best he could make of it was: 'The favourite made all the winning, and ran by twilight.' Another description was: 'The pair ran together to the distance, where Avon Belle got in front, and eventually won, after a good race, by a *week*.'

A great many yarns of peculiar errors are

current in the service, many of which are very comical, but, bearing the stamp of having been concocted for the sake of the joke, are not to be put forward as genuine telegraphic blunders. One of them, however, as an example of telegraphists' humour, may fitly conclude this paper. A press-man reporting a big fire, gave prominence to the fact that a gentleman in the neighbourhood had lent his private hose-pipe. By the time the report reached its destination the sentence had become, 'Mr W—— kindly lent his *nose-wipe*.'

AN INDIAN JOURNEY.

THERE prevails among my sex at home the idea that thrice blessed are those fortunate sisters whose destiny leads them to spend their lives on the sunny plains and verdant hills of India; that their time is spent in a whirl of gaiety tempered with the luxurious ease of an Eastern life. This may be the case with a favoured few; but many an officer's wife in India has to rough it in a way which would rather appal the ordinary English-woman, were she suddenly called upon to undergo an experience similar to that which I am about to relate.

In the month of March 1888, my husband was unexpectedly ordered to proceed at once to join a new Goorkha regiment at a station called Kaludanda. We were at that time in the Southern Punjab, having just settled down in a comfortable bungalow, after a winter spent by me in Peshawar, and by my husband under canvas on the Afghan frontier. But such is the lot of a soldier's life, and custom had hardened me to the possibility of having to pack up my household gods and be off at a moment's notice. A most important matter, however, was to find out where the place was to which we had been ordered; and after inquiry among our friends in the cantonment, we discovered that only the vaguest idea existed as to its whereabouts, and how to get there no one knew. The reason for this was that it was a perfectly new station, formed for the accommodation of the new Goorkha regiment, which had only been raised a short time before. A telegram addressed to Kaludanda, however, after some delay brought back an answer informing us that our future home lay in the hills of the North-west Provinces, about thirty-five miles from the railway station of Najibabad, and that there were as yet no houses built. This did not sound very promising; and I regretfully gazed on the bare walls and rubbish-strewn floors of my once bright little bungalow, and bade a tender farewell to my favourite pony, which had been transferred to a new owner. But there was no time for sentiment. The bullock-carts were creaking off to the station with our baggage; and after a hurried last look at our old regiment, who happened to be holding their regimental sports that afternoon, we were off in the train for Lahore.

Nothing noteworthy happened during this part of the journey. On arriving at Lahore next morning, we had the customary dear and horrible breakfast at the station, the nastiness of which

must be experienced to be realised. Scarcely had we finished, when we were hurried into the train for Saharanpore, which was reached at 12.30 that night, after a long day in a hot and dusty carriage. Then, amid the dense crowd of jabbering bundle-laden natives, my husband had to rush off to collect our dazed and sleepy servants, and send them with our beds and baggage to the dak bungalow where we were to pass the night. When we got there, we found that all the rooms were occupied; and so I had to sit yawning for another hour while our tent was being brought from the station and pitched in the compound. It was long after two o'clock before I got to bed.

Next morning, another railway journey brought us to Najibabad, the nearest station to Kaludanda. We were relieved to see our horses standing safely under a tree close by, they having been sent on in advance. Here I first saw a Goorkha, for a funny little havildar met us at the station with a letter containing directions for our further journey. He was only about five feet high, and very queer he looked after the huge Pathans and Sikhs that I had been accustomed to in the Punjab. He informed us that we must spend the day here, as it would be too hot to cross the Terai, through which our road lay, under the blazing sun. We accordingly camped in a dilapidated empty bungalow near the station, which was the only shelter to be had; and our servants soon produced a meal of the inevitable *murgi* and *chapatis*, the national Indian bread, which is simply a horrible thin leathery cake of half-cooked flour and water. This repast over, we went out to look about us. We were just at the edge of the thick belt of jungle which lies all along the foot of the Himalayas; and beyond the trees we could see the forest-clad hills rising up ridge after ridge to the magnificent snowy peaks over a hundred miles away.

Under the guidance of our friend the havildar, we set out to explore Najibabad, which is a large native town, but very much out of the way of travellers, and where I was consequently the object of what was for me rather unpleasant interest to the inhabitants. As a result of this I soon retired to the bungalow again, where we rested until evening, when my husband went off to despatch our servants and baggage in bullock-carts on their way through the jungle.

We were up next morning at three o'clock, and while my husband packed our beds, I hurriedly made some tea in our camp-kettle. Then strange noises in the darkness outside indicated the arrival of the elephant which was to take us across the jungle to the foot of the hills. The beds and bags being tied on the pad by the *mahout* as the great beast knelt at the door, I was hoisted into my place; and away we paced in the darkness through the sleeping city, the elephant filling the narrow streets, so that one could touch the houses on either side. Then out into the eerie blackness of the forest, I filled with a curious sensation at the novelty of my position; for here were we in the middle of the night plunging into a jungle swarming with wild animals of all sorts, the only two white people within many miles.

After two hours of monotonous jogging through the darkness, a pink glow appears in the eastern sky, and soon the rapidly breaking dawn enables us to see about us. We are passing along a

narrow path, a wall of foliage on either side, and the trees meeting overhead. The mysterious sounds of night give place to the voices of the awakening birds, the crow of the jungle-cock, the shrill screams of flocks of parrots flashing like meteors through the air, and the varied notes of many others hidden from our sight. As the sun rises, the full beauty of the forest becomes revealed. On every side are huge trees, some hung with festoons of thin snake-like creepers; others destitute of leaves, but covered with beautiful tulip-like scarlet flowers; others, again, a blaze of crimson foliage. Every here and there opens a lovely little glade, dotted with great clumps of tall graceful bamboos and big-leaved plants. Wild pig, deer, and peacock run across our path; and on the road in front I see what is apparently the familiar barndoor cock scraping as vigorously as if he were in the farmyard at home, although he is a *jangla murga* in his native wilds.

The most startling spectacle is, however, when, after much crashing of branches has been heard, a herd of a dozen wild elephants crosses the path about fifty yards ahead, deigning to notice their captive brother only by a disdainful glance and flourish of their trunks. The *mahout* informs us that they are very common in this district, but quite inoffensive, unless one happens to meet a rogue in a bad temper. This intelligence does not add to my comfort, especially as he casually remarks that there is more than one rogue in the neighbourhood. Two or three small streams are cautiously forded by our elephant, which is evidently getting hungry, for it breaks off branches and munches them as it goes along.

At last at ten o'clock we reach the small village, lying in the mouth of a gorge at the foot of the hills, where we expect to find our servants and breakfast; and I gladly scramble off the back of the beast which has been my uncomfortable resting-place for the last six hours. As we come up, we find our tent pitched and the baggage being got off the carts, which have been all night on the road. During the last hour, heavy black clouds have been rolling down the hills, and we have scarcely got under cover when the storm breaks with a deluge of rain, in consequence of which we get nothing to eat till past three o'clock, by which time we are ravenous, as may well be imagined. After this, the *thanadar* or head-policeman of the village is summoned, and the possibility of procuring coolies is discussed; for at this place the cart-road ends, and everything must now go forward on the backs of men or mules. He promises to have sufficient men collected by to-morrow morning, and with many salaams, departs.

The rest of the day we spend rambling among the rocks and under the trees, and revelling in the freshness and verdure of everything after the arid desert of the Punjab.

Early next morning the *thanadar* appears, driving before him, with much shouting, a crowd of almost naked villagers, who with a great show of reluctance and expostulation hoist our boxes on their heads and disappear up the winding path. These being safely despatched before us, we start to walk to our next camping-ground, fifteen miles farther on, up a most exquisite gorge with precipitous sides, covered with foliage, and a foaming

mountain torrent dashing over the rocks at the bottom. The narrow path winds along one side—in some places a mere ledge on the face of the rock overhanging the stream, in others running through groves of the most magnificent bamboos. Once we see an immense troop of monkeys jumping from tree to tree, and drinking in the stream, perfectly undisturbed by our presence. So we go on steadily rising mile after mile, each turn of the road disclosing a scene of greater beauty than the last. Every now and then we come upon some of our property lying on the path, while the bearers squat beside it smoking a very primitive pipe made of a rolled-up leaf pinned by a thorn. But they are inexorably driven on by my husband; for the only chance of getting our baggage up at all is to keep it in front of us.

A long string of sheep passes us on their way to the plains, each with its little pack on its back. They have come all the way from Bhotan, across the highest passes of the Himalayas, where nothing but a mountain sheep could find a footing. They carry down borax and salt, and take rice and other grain back to the hills on their return journey, being altogether about three months on the road.

As we are beginning to look out anxiously for our next camping-ground after our long climb, we are astonished by the appearance of a Pathan sepoy riding on a mule. He brings us a letter, and says that there is a camp of Bengal Sappers a couple of miles farther on. The letter turns out to be from an old friend; and when we get into the snug little camp we are warmly welcomed and find lunch ready and acceptable.

That evening, after dining in the tiny mess tent, carpeted with the skins of the many victims of our host's rifles, we sit outside listening to the piper of the company, who performs with extra vigour in honour of his increased audience. As I am tired, I soon retire to my tent, only to be wakened an hour after by the shouting of the servants, while something plunges violently among our tent-ropes. This turns out to be a leopard, which has been prowling about the camp, probably on the lookout for its favourite morsel, a fox-terrier.

Next morning we start on the last stage of our journey up a very steep ascent of three thousand feet to the top of the mountain which is our destination. We are mounted on mules kindly lent us by our friend, who rides a part of the way with us. Our steeds scramble over the rocks, for path there is none, in a way which makes me feel very uncomfortable, until I find that they are as sure-footed as cats, whether picking their way along a knife-like ridge of rock with a precipice on either side, or over the slippery surfaces of a pile of boulders. As we rise, the character of the trees begins to change; magnificent rhododendrons, with trunks a yard in diameter, a blaze of crimson blossom, shine out among the dark foliage of huge oaks draped with moss and lichens; and every here and there groups of lovely pines remind us of Scottish woods.

On reaching the top at last, we are rewarded by a view of extraordinary beauty and extent. On the north we look down into a deep valley, green with fields and dotted with little brown villages; while beyond that, the hills roll away back to the peaks of the Himalayas, running in a chain of

dazzling whiteness for hundreds of miles along the horizon. To the south lie the plains, stretched out like the sea as far as the eye can reach. As we ride along the ridge we see glimpses of tents among the trees, and come upon a working-party making a road to a spring. This path leads into a cluster of thatched mud huts, the temporary regimental lines; and above them on a knoll are the tents of the officers. Our arrival seems to create great excitement among the men, which is explained by the fact that I am the first white woman the most of them have ever seen, they being raw recruits, who have only just arrived from the high hills under the snows. All the accommodation to be had is a wretched little hut, beside which we pitch our tent, and the journey is over.

THE WORK OF THE ROYAL MINT IN 1888.

THE Report of the Deputy-Master of the Mint for the year 1888, which has been recently issued, presents many features of interest. We will preface the information which we have gleaned from it with some particulars of the Mint establishment.

The work of coinage was transferred in 1810 from the Tower of London, where it had been carried on for many years, to the present Mint on Tower Hill. The head of the department is the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being, who is *ex officio* Master of the Mint, the practical direction of the work being placed in the hands of a permanent officer, the Deputy-Master, who is responsible for its due performance.

From the English Mint is supplied the coinage of the whole of the British Empire, including the colonies, with the exception of Australia and the East Indies, which are supplied with coin from branch Mints established as to the former country at Sydney and Melbourne, and as to the latter at Calcutta and Bombay.

The number of each denomination of coin that is issued varies considerably from year to year, the demand naturally determining the supply. The coinage of medals for the army and navy and the Board of Trade, as well as those given by the Royal and other Horticultural Societies, the University of London, &c., are struck in the Mint, and their preparation forms a considerable part of the work of the die department. In this connection may be mentioned the preparation and issue to the public of the medals struck in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee, the issue of which was brought to a close on the 31st of December last.

Gold coin is issued by the Mint to the Bank of England at nearly the market value of the bullion; but a considerable seigniorage or profit accrues to the Mint from the silver coinage, that department being empowered by Act of Parliament to coin every pound of silver into sixty-six shillings; while it is enabled to purchase silver bullion at a much lower price. A large profit is also produced by the bronze coinage.

Adverting to the Deputy-Master's Report before mentioned, we find that the pressure of the demand for both imperial and colonial coins made

it necessary, towards the close of 1888, greatly to prolong the hours of work, and that this pressure continued for some months. The special requirements of Hong-kong, for instance, involved the coinage, telling, and packing of many millions of small pieces, entailing a great amount of labour. The total number of good pieces of the imperial and colonial coinage struck at the Mint during the year 1888 was 52,153,700; and their value, real or nominal, £3,363,524. Of these pieces, 28,856,162, of the real or nominal value of £3,070,053, consisted of imperial coinage, and the remaining 23,297,538 pieces (£293,471) of colonial coinage, chiefly for Hong-kong, Canada, Newfoundland, and the Straits Settlements. In addition to the above, 6,458,134 pieces, being 11·02 per cent. of the whole coinage, were struck, but were rejected by the Mint officers as incorrect in weight or of defective appearance.

The gold coinage of the year 1888, although exceeding by £283,000 that of 1887, was below the average; but the demand for silver coin was excessive, notwithstanding an exceptionally large issue in 1887. The bronze coinage was somewhat less than in the previous year.

Of all the denominations, more halfpence were struck than of any other coin, the number being 7,347,200. Pence came next (5,268,400), then shillings (4,645,080). Of sixpences, 4,015,400 were coined; of farthings, 2,150,400; of sovereigns, 2,032,900; of florins, 1,546,380; of half-crowns, 1,427,184; of threepences, 511,368; and of crowns, 161,568. No half-sovereigns were coined in 1888. 124,158 fourpences were struck, but these were entirely for British Guiana, where this coin is much in request for payment for taskwork.

Silver bullion was purchased by the Mint for coinage during the year at an average price of 42½d. per ounce; and as silver coin is—as before stated—issued by the Mint at the rate of 66d. per ounce, the seigniorage or profit which accrued to the State was at the rate of 23½d. per ounce, or 53½ per cent., as against 48 per cent. in 1887. In the year 1871, the rate of seigniorage was 9½ per cent. only, and it has been gradually increasing since that period. The profit on the silver bullion purchased in 1888 amounted to £176,339; and the excess of receipts over expenses was £137,077, being the largest amount realised in the last seventeen years, with the exception of 1887, when it was £187,753.

The amount of gold coins from Australian branch Mints received by the Bank of England in 1888 was £3,535,000, in sovereigns; as against a yearly average of £1,947,000 during the ten years ended 1887. The receipt of these coins at the Bank fell in 1887 to £202,000, in consequence, it is presumed, of the depression of trade in Australia during the year; and it is satisfactory, therefore, to note the large amount imported in 1888.

The number of medals of various descriptions struck during the year was 3885, of which 1595 were gold and silver Jubilee medals, and 2025 war medals.

There was, it is satisfactory to observe, a considerable falling off in the number of prosecutions for offences against the coinage laws, these cases having been 150 in 1888, against 226 in 1887; and the number of persons charged 255 against

397. There were only five prosecutions during the year for uttering 'Hanover' medals, as against nine in 1887; and it would appear that the Counterfeit Medal Act of 1883 has almost put an end to offences of this description.

In connection with the Report which we have had under review, reference may here be made to the Light Gold Coinage Bill, which has recently been introduced into parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to carry out the provisions of which an estimate has been submitted to the House. The Bill is, the Chancellor stated, a preliminary step towards redressing what is generally admitted to be a considerable grievance—namely, the existence of a large quantity of old light sovereigns and half-sovereigns. He estimates that the number of such coins, issued in former reigns, that are now in circulation amount to about £4,000,000 in nominal value; and he proposes to call in these coins as far as possible and purchase them at par. In fact, the government is prepared to adopt the principle first propounded by Aladdin's wicked uncle, when he exchanged old lamps for new ones, and to give a brand-new Queen's head for a battered effigy of George or William, the government taking upon itself the consequent loss (estimated at £80,000) of the transaction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes next session to deal with the whole question of the gold coinage of the United Kingdom.

AT TWILIGHT.

I.

The speedwell folds her leaves of blue,
In tears that each dark petal gem
With many a dainty diadem
And spray of glistening, starry dew;
While slowly stealing up the vale,
O'er banks and dells and mossy crags,
By many a pool of reedy flags
The mists of twilight softly sail.

II.

The very air breathes peace. The light
Dying on rosy, far hill-tops,
Peers through the silent, dark fir-cope,
And fades into the gray of night;
Then, opening 'mid the solemn strife
Of day with dark, the spirit's eye
Recalls the loving memory
Of some whom Death hath crowned with life.

III.

Swift wakens all the shadowy past—
Forgotten words, and joys, and tears;
The buried hopes of bygone years,
The dreams that were too bright to last—
Come back—by new, diviner birth,
Each with a radiance of its own,
From that far land unseen, unknown,
Beyond the shadows of this earth;
Where, having drawn a nobler breath
Of life and love than earth can give,
Man, by the mystery of Death,
At last triumphant learns to Live.

B. G. JOHNS.

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